



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

United States Patent and Trademark Office

Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

P.O. Box 1450

Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/753,495	01/09/2004	Jin Woong Kim	2832-0173P	6825
2292 7590 06/04/2009 BIRCH STEWART KOLASCH & BIRCH PO BOX 747 FALLS CHURCH, VA 22040-0747				
EXAMINER HECKERT, JASON MARK				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1792				
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
06/04/2009		ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

mailroom@bskb.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/753,495

Applicant(s)

KIM ET AL.

Examiner

JASON HECKERT

Art Unit

1792

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 March 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,4,6-19,25-30,42,43 and 45-52 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,4,6-19,25-30,42,43 and 45-52 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 5/8/09
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Due to applicant's amendments to the claims, the previous rejections are rendered moot.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claim 1-2, 6-7, 16-19, 26-30, 45-49 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over DE 197 43 508 ('208) in view of Nakamura. '508 teaches a laundry machine with a casing, a tub, a drum, and a steam generator 9 located between the tub and casing. A water supply unit with valve 15 exclusive to the steam generator is included. '508 does not show the casing, however including a cabinet and enclosing the conduits, tub, etc. within said cabinet is considered to be obvious, if not inherent, to one of ordinary skill. Thus, '508 teaches obviates a steam supply unit within the casing of a horizontal drum washing machine. The location of the water-supply valve is not considered to be a patentably distinct feature, as valve 15 can perform the required function at any location on the conduit. '508 discloses the output of steam is injected downwardly into the tub towards a center portion. The generation unit is located outside the tub. '508 teaches the separate detergent dispenser and associated water supply. '508 does not disclose that the steam generation system is within a container.

Nakamura et al. discloses a standard washing machine with standard components such as a housing, a tub, and a drum as seen in figure 1. Nakamura et al. also discloses a water-supply unit comprising a valve 17 and a water supply tube 16 connecting the valve to an inlet of container 6. Said container has a boiler 7 and a cylindrical outlet tube 8 with an upper end disposed at an upper part of the container and a lower end disposed outside the container. This upper part of the container protrudes from the lower part and, considering steam rises, a portion of this upper part will store steam before it leaves the container. Furthermore, if steam is to travel through tube 8, then the tube must be fixed to the container at a location in correspondence with the steam storing part. Finally tube 8 is connected to a nozzle 20 that delivers steam to the laundry, which is a functional equivalent of a steam tube. Water introduced to this generator ultimately is injected into the tub. In regards to claims 18, in the box-like generator of Nakamura, the upper 50% of the volume constitutes an "upper part". Hence, Nakamura's steam generating device read on the broadest reasonable interpretation of the applicant's claims. Nakamura's machine has a vertical drum, not a horizontal drum. As stated previously, '508 discloses the use of steam in a horizontal drum, as well as locating a steam generation unit between the tub and casing, injecting the steam into a top portion of the drum, and providing a separate water supply for steam. One of ordinary skill realizes that parts 9 and 15 could be a separate self-contained entity, as shown by Nakamura's generator. The claimed elements were known in the prior art and the combination would have yielded predictable results to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention. It would have been obvious at the

time of invention to modify '508 and include the steam generation unit of Nakamura, in order to provide steam to a horizontal drum washing machine from an independent source of water.

4. In regards to claims 17 and 28, Nakamura et al. discloses the steam generation unit as being located above the tub and between the tub and the casing. '508 shows a steam unit between the tub and casing. Neither shows it below the tub between the tub and the casing. Rearrangement of parts was held to have been obvious. *In re Japikse* 86 USPQ 70 (CCPA 1955). It would have been obvious at the time of the invention to modify '508 in view of Nakamura et al. and alter the location of the steam generator to fit different design parameters.

5. Claim 4, 25, 50 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over '508 in view of Nakamura and further in view of Chang. Nakamura et al. does disclose the steam tube being located in the upper end of the tub for delivering steam but does not disclose a gasket for preventing leakage of water between the tub and the casing. Chang discloses a gasket 35 for preventing leakage from tub 5. Furthermore, gaskets are notoriously well known in the art, and simply including them for their conventional use cannot be considered novel. It would have been obvious at the time of the invention to modify '508 in view of Nakamura, as stated above, and further include a gasket as taught by Chang for preventing leakage. It would also be obvious for the steam supply to penetrate this gasket in some regard, otherwise the steam generator would not be able to perform its intended function of delivering steam to the tub, a function disclosed by Nakamura et al.

6. Claims 8-9 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over '508 in view of Nakamura in view of Sloan et al. and further in view of Wang. Nakamura et al. does not disclose a submerged heating element. Sloan et al. discloses a steam generator with an electric heating element 14 disposed in such a fashion that even at a minimum water level, proper heating takes place. Heating coils are notoriously well known in the art. Wang also discloses a steam generator with a slightly different arrangement, in which heating coil 14 is at the bottom of the boiler 11, but not below a conductive material like Sloan et al. It would have been obvious at the time of the invention, to modify '508 in view of Nakamura, as stated above, and arrange an electric heating coil at the bottom of the boiler, as taught by Sloan et al. and Wang, in order to allow water to boil even at its minimum level.

7. Claim 10 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over '508 in view of Nakamura in further view of Pick. Nakamura et al. does not disclose the inlet valve being controlled by solenoids. Solenoid valves are notoriously well known in the art and their use cannot be considered novel. Pick discloses an inlet valve of a washing machine that is operated by solenoids. It would have been obvious at the time of the invention to modify Nakamura et al. in view of '508, as stated above, and provide a solenoid inlet valve, as taught by Pick, so that the valve can be controlled electrically.

8. Claim 11, 51 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over '508 in view of Nakamura in further view of Aksenov et al. Nakamura et al. does not disclose a temperature sensor in the boiler. Aksenov et al. disclose an electrically heated steam generator with control 40 and temperature sensor 41. Furthermore, temperature control

is notoriously common in the art. It would have been obvious at the time of the invention to modify '508 in view of Nakamura, as stated above, and include a temperature sensor with associated control elements as taught by Aksekov et al., in order to control the temperature of the temperature inside the boiler.

9. Claim 12, 52 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over '508 in view of Nakamura in further view of Tsutsumi. Nakamura et al. does not disclose a blower or fan in the outlet tube. The applicant does not clearly show how a blower would be included in said apparatus. However, the use of a blower or fan is notoriously well known in the art for the purpose of driving steam out of the generator. Tsutsumi discloses such a fan 12 for driving steam out of a steam generator. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention to modify '508 in view of Nakamura, as stated above, and include a blower near the outlet of the generator, as taught by Tsutsumi, in order to force steam out of the generator.

10. Claims 13-15 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over '508 in view of Nakamura in further view of Glucksman. Nakamura does not disclose a wash-water flow-restraining unit mounted in the container. Various known methods for restraining, or controlling fluid flow, are known in the art from simple float valves to elaborate processes involving detection and control schemes. Any of these would read on "flow restraining unit". Glucksman discloses a water control means involving partitions in figure 3. Chamber 30 extends down to just above the bottom of tray 42, like partition 1 of the claimed invention. Outside of chamber 30 exists another wall surrounding the walls of 30, so as to divide the chamber into different water holding

areas, each of uniform level. Finally, a passage exists below the wall of chamber 30 for allowing water to flow from one compartment to the other. It would have been obvious to modify '508 in view of Nakamura, as stated above, and include partitions, as taught by Glucksman, in order to maintain proper water level in the apparatus.

Conclusion

4. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **JASON HECKERT** whose telephone number is (571)272-2702. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon. to Friday, 9:00 - 5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Barr can be reached on (571)272-1414. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Michael Barr/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art
Unit 1792

JMH